

IBM'S 1956 Hard Drive: The Explosion of Knowledge

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The knowledge explosion began in earnest in the 19th century, increased dramatically in the 20th, and shows no signs of slowing in the 21st.

My grandparents witnessed the change from the horse and buggy age to the rocket age. The rapid increase of knowledge is witnessed by the 56 years of hard drive history.

IBM's cutting-edge 3.75 megabyte hard drive in 1956 weighed 2,000 pounds. It could be rented for \$3,200 per month. Today an iPhone with its smallest hard drive (16 gigabyte) has about 4,000 times the digital capacity, weighs a few ounces, can be purchased for \$700, and can do thousands of things the 1956 machine could not do. Had they existed, one lonely iPhone digital photo could have been stored on the 1956 IBM drive, except that commercially-available digital photos didn't appear until 1988.

All of this reminds us of a 2,500-year-old prophecy about the end time...

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